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## Senate Bills to Honor Black History in Michigan

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**LANSING** - In honor of Black History Month, Senator Tom George (R-Texas Township), in collaboration with Senators Mark Schauer (D-Battle Creek) and Buzz Thomas (D-Detroit), today announced a package of bills to commemorate Michigan's role in the Underground Railroad. Senator George's bill (SB 241) creates the Underground Railroad Memorial Highway, while Senator Schauer's (SB 242) creates the Michigan Freedom Trail license plate and Senator Thomas' (SB 243) creates the Michigan Freedom Trail fund.

"As many as 50,000 slaves escaped to freedom through Michigan and many of them through the Schoolcraft area," said George. "The works of people like Dr. Nathan Thomas and Erastus Hussey, both local area Quakers and major participants in the Underground Railroad, should not be forgotten."

The Underground Railroad Memorial Highway will designate the portion of highway I-94 between exits 98 and 110 and the portion of US-131 in Schoolcraft Township, Kalamazoo County, between West U Avenue and XY Avenue. These sections of I-94 and US-131 were chosen because they closely follow a portion of the "Quaker" or "Old Territorial Road" route, one of the most active Underground Railroad routes in Michigan.

"This is an epic part of Michigan, of United States History, which can not be ignored," said Thomas. "The Michigan Freedom Trail Commission helps to make sure that we remember how the extraordinary efforts of a few saved the lives of so many."

The Michigan Freedom Trail Commission works with the Department of History, Arts and Libraries to document, preserve and support work that showcases the Underground Railroad as a vital part of Michigan's history.

"Michigan played a huge role in the Underground Railroad movement," said Schauer. "The bravery of our citizens, like those involved in the Crosswhite Affair, which took place in Marshall in 1847, as well as others, many unknown, deserves to be memorialized."